

Tropic of Perception

10 May – 14 June 2025
9 Lock Road, Gillman Barracks

Tropic of Perception explores the shifting nature of perception—how environments, histories, and sensorial experiences shape the way we see and understand the world. The exhibition considers how states of flux, transition, and transformation impact memory, identity, and knowledge production. Through a variety of media, the artists in this exhibition engage with questions of materiality, temporality, and the slippages between the real and the imagined.

The title suggests a geography not of place, but of thought—a mental and emotional terrain where perception is altered, destabilized, and reconfigured. This exhibition unfolds as a space where material and immaterial forces collide, generating new ways of seeing and understanding. It invites visitors to interrogate their own perceptual processes and the conditions that shape them. How do cultural narratives, environmental conditions, and embodied experiences mediate what we see and how we make meaning? In an age of rapid change—whether technological, ecological, or sociopolitical—the exhibition poses perception itself as a site of negotiation, where reality is fluid, constructed, and open to revision.

Bringing together artists who work across different registers of materiality, temporality, and mediated experience, *Tropic of Perception* blurs boundaries between presence and absence, visibility and obscurity, certainty and ambiguity. It considers perception as a dynamic, ever-evolving landscape—one that is not fixed but in constant motion, where meaning is formed in the act of seeing and re-seeing.

EXHIBITION TEXT

When I first began thinking about *Tropic of Perception*, I was drawn to the idea that perception is not fixed but constantly in flux — shaped by our environments, histories, and sensorial experiences. I wanted to create an exhibition that did not simply present artworks as discrete objects, but invited audiences into spaces where seeing, reading, and understanding could be destabilised — where meaning would remain fluid, provisional, and open to reconfiguration.

The composition of artists in *Tropic of Perception* was deliberate. While their practices span different geographies and mediums, each artist shares a sensitivity to material and a preoccupation with states of transition — whether across memory, identity, or landscape.

Pam Virada's *Seaside Highway* explores thresholds of visibility and concealment, where acts of looking are infused with suspense and partial revelation. Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier extend this inquiry across two distinct bodies of work: their *Emboss/Deboss* paper piece folds language back onto itself, relying on light and surface to render text fleeting and unstable; *Les Beaux Restes*, by contrast, confronts the passage of time and mortality through cast forms that hover between familiarity and estrangement, quietly marking the erosion and persistence of memory. FX Harsono's gumoil prints, drawn from archival identity documents, similarly straddle presence and erasure, foregrounding the fragility of identity in the face of systemic marginalisation.

Korakrit Arunanondchai's denim paintings, distinct from his large-scale video works, occupy a quieter terrain — evoking landscapes shaped by memory, labour, and global flows of culture. Chemi Rosado-Seijo's repurposed paint fragments, drawn from years of community engagement, propose new cartographies formed through collaboration and resilience. Kumari Nahappan's *Shared Album Memory Card* reimagines obsolete digital media as a vivid tapestry of remembrance, reflecting on how our repositories of memory have shifted from the tangible to the immaterial.

Across these works, perception unfolds not as a singular event, but as an ongoing, unstable process — layered, mutable, and intimately shaped by material, history, and experience. *Tropic of Perception* invites viewers to move through spaces of presence and absence, visibility and obscurity, certainty and ambiguity — a reminder that how we see is always in negotiation with the world around us.